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# Follow-up to the implementation of the International Year of Volunteers

## Report of the Secretary-General

*Summary*

The present report is submitted in response to the requests of the General Assembly, in its resolutions 63/153 and 66/67, that the Secretary-General report to it at its sixty-seventh session on the implementation of the recommendations contained in those resolutions and on the marking of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers, 2001, and to propose recommendations to further integrate volunteerism in peace and development during the next decade and beyond.

The period since 2001 has seen the implementation of an increased number of volunteerism-related national and regional policies and the inclusion of volunteerism in high-level cooperative documents, although there are wide variations in trends among countries and regions in terms of degree of involvement by Governments, the United Nations system, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders. The publication of the first *State of the World's Volunteerism Report* and the marking of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers, in 2011, accelerated momentum in the recognition, promotion, facilitation and networking of volunteerism. In turn, this helped to increase the integration of volunteer contributions in efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and in sustainable peace and development agendas. Assessment of the overall impact of volunteerism is, however, impeded by the disparate approaches to valuing and measuring the contributions of volunteerism to progress.

For the decade ahead, the present report highlights, for the further attention of Governments and other actors, how the promotion, recognition, facilitation,

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networking and integration of local, national and international volunteering, including that of young people, can significantly contribute to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, foster social cohesion and enhance social inclusion, life skills, employability, resilience and community well-being. Volunteerism should be an integral part of the post-2015 development framework. The mainstreaming of volunteer engagement will ensure that people are placed at the heart of sustainable peace and development efforts.

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# I. Introduction

1. In 1997, the General Assembly, in its resolution 52/17, proclaimed the International Year of Volunteers, 2001, to recognize the valuable contribution of volunteer actions in addressing global issues. The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme was designated as the focal point for implementation and follow-up. By its resolution 56/38, the Assembly marked the end of the International Year of Volunteers, recognizing that volunteerism was an important component of any strategy aimed at such areas as poverty reduction, sustainable development, health, disaster prevention and management and social integration and, in particular, overcoming social exclusion and discrimination. In the same resolution, the Assembly called upon all Governments and organizations of the United Nations system to give due consideration to the recommendations on ways in which they could support volunteering, as set out in the annex to the resolution.

2. In 2002, the General Assembly, by its resolution 57/106, recognized the valuable contribution of volunteering, including traditional forms of mutual aid and self-help, formal service delivery and other forms of civic participation, to economic and social development, benefiting society at large, communities and the individual Volunteer, and its important role in helping to meet the Millennium Development Goals and the goals agreed at other United Nations conferences, summits, special sessions and their follow-up meetings.

3. The Secretary-General, in reporting in 2005 and 2008 on the follow-up to the implementation of the International Year of Volunteers (A/57/352 and A/60/128), indicated that many of the recommendations of the Assembly were being taken up by Governments and United Nations actors and by other stakeholders from civil society and the private sector, and that volunteerism was being viewed as a vast, largely untapped resource that developing country Governments in particular were only beginning to recognize as a considerable asset in meeting sustainable development challenges.

4. In 2008, the General Assembly, by its resolution 63/153, requested the Secretary-General to report to it further at its sixty-seventh session on the follow-up to the International Year of Volunteers and invited Governments, with the active support of other stakeholders, to carry out activities focused on marking its tenth anniversary, in 2011. By the same resolution, the Assembly decided that, on or around 5 December 2011, the International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development, two plenary meetings of its sixty-sixth session should be devoted to follow-up to the International Year and the commemoration of its tenth anniversary. During those meetings, the General Assembly adopted resolution 66/67, in which it affirmed and expanded its request for reporting to include a full report on the marking of the tenth anniversary, as well as recommendations to further integrate volunteering into peace and development strategies during the next decade and beyond.

5. The present report, submitted in response to the above-mentioned requests, considers the overall progress made in implementing the resolutions of the General Assembly, primarily those adopted since the previous report in 2008. It highlights the publication by the United Nations of *State of the World's Volunteerism Report:*

*Universal Values for Global Well-being*[1] and activities to mark the tenth anniversary of the International Year. It provides recommendations for the next decade that expand on past accomplishments.

## II. Reflections on a decade of progress

6. Building on the momentum of the International Year of Volunteers, in 2001, progress has been made in acknowledging the role and contribution of volunteerism in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and in recognizing that the participation of volunteers is integral to sustainable development. Volunteerism has been included in several high-level documents adopted over the past decade. The Political Declaration and Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002,[2] made multiple references to how volunteering was empowering older persons and contributing to their personal well-being. The Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development,[3] adopted in 2002, refers to the roles of volunteer community service and volunteer groups in the achievement of sustainable development. The Hyogo Declaration[4] and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters[5] recognize volunteers among the key stakeholders in addressing disaster reduction, sustainable development and poverty eradication, as well as the important role of volunteers and voluntary spirit in disaster risk reduction. In the outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals (resolution 65/1), the Assembly encouraged stakeholders, including volunteer associations, to enhance their role. The independent report on civilian capacity in the aftermath of conflict (see A/65/747-S/2011/85), referring to United Nations partnerships, recommended more effective use of volunteers, particularly United Nations Volunteers. The Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020[6] recommended actions to support volunteering with a view to enhancing the participation and development of youth. At the third session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2011, the Chair concluded that the engagement of the volunteer community was a key strategy for building resilient and safe communities. The declaration adopted at the sixty-fourth annual Conference of the Department of Public Information for Non-Governmental Organizations (A/66/750, annex) contains multiple references to the role of volunteerism in achieving sustainable societies. In reviewing the implementation of previous recommendations concerning the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, the Secretary-General recommended that, in post-conflict countries, the United Nations could assist in engaging with young people and prioritizing quality and innovative education, such

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[1] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.11.I.12. Available also from www.unv.org/en/swvr2011.html.

[2] *Report of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, Madrid, 8-12 April 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.IV.4), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

[3] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

[4] A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. I, resolution 1.

[5] Ibid., resolution 2.

[6] See *Report of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Istanbul, Turkey, 9-13 May 2011* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.11.II.A.1), chap. II.

as, inter alia, volunteerism (see A/66/214-S/2011/476). In resolution 66/121, on policies and programmes involving youth, the General Assembly urged Member States to specifically address youth development in their economic and financial recovery measures by, inter alia, promoting volunteerism. In the outcome document of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), entitled "The future we want", volunteer groups are included among the stakeholders whose meaningful involvement is required to deliver sustainable development.

7. The ongoing global economic crisis is providing both challenges and opportunities for volunteerism. Some Governments have decreased funding for social services and culture while calling on civil society and volunteers to fill the gaps. Obtaining development aid resources, including those for international volunteering, is becoming more challenging. Recent economic, environmental and political crises have sparked mass movements of volunteers around the globe, highlighting the power of civic participation through volunteerism. The study *Broadening Civic Space through Voluntary Action: Lessons from 2011*,[7] published by CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation and UNV, identified increased interest by community members in volunteering to improve social well-being but less desire to formally join civil society organizations. Consideration needs to be given to ways in which to build supportive environments that can encompass volunteering, both through and outside formal organizations, as positive forces within society.

8. The world has moved far beyond the launch of the World Volunteer Web on 5 December 2002. New technologies now include web- and mobile-based technologies which allow interactive dialogue. Social media are used to connect volunteer-involving organizations and individual volunteers, to promote, facilitate, coordinate and recognize volunteers, to ensure accountability and to inspire volunteerism. Using new technology, the means, breadth and impact of volunteering are being expanded and a growing community of volunteers is changing the face of humanitarian work. For example, amid the devastation caused by the Haiti earthquake in 2010, survivors communicated through traditional and new media, including weblogs, Twitter and SMS. In response, groups of volunteers from around the world have created software tools and Internet-based communities. Survivor messages were forwarded to Haitian expatriates for translation. Volunteers created near real-time situation maps and directories of missing persons. In the case of Libya, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in 2011 mobilized the volunteer community to create an online crisis map of Libya which provided live information, such as health needs, security threats and refugee movements, thereby greatly assisting humanitarian relief efforts.

## III. Progress in implementation

9. The four objectives of the International Year of Volunteers and its follow-up activities are recognition, promotion, facilitation and networking. The aims are to generate increased awareness of the achievements of volunteerism and further enhance the potential of volunteer activity; encourage more people to volunteer; enhance capacities and resources to augment effective participation through volunteerism; and engage all population sectors.

[7] Available from www.unv.org/fileadmin/img/unv/2011%20volunteerism%20publication.pdf.

10. It is clear that progress has been made, but it remains uneven. In an online global public survey conducted in connection with the present report, 77 per cent of the 2,284 respondents were of the view that the impact of volunteerism was more recognized today than a decade ago. Seventy-six per cent considered volunteering to be more accessible. Most were of the opinion volunteering added to the development and well-being of society and added to skills and expertise. However, detailed accounts from Governments, civil society organizations, businesses,[8] researchers and United Nations actors noted cases of insufficient national progress in implementation owing to the lack of a designated focal point, inadequate coordinating mechanisms and the need for supportive resources and policies.

## A. Recognition and promotion

11. Previously, enhanced recognition of volunteering and its contributions was considered a means to encourage, and even convince, Governments and the public to encourage broad segments of society to volunteer. As more Governments have become aware of the potential of volunteerism, recognition and promotion have increasingly become interrelated agendas.

12. The observation each year on 5 December of the International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development has provided an opportunity for many Governments to join with civil society, the private sector, United Nations actors and volunteers to acknowledge the value of volunteering to social well-being. In Guinea-Bissau, the Government and a multi-stakeholder national volunteers committee, joined by United Nations agencies, organized a public celebration in the main square of the national capital. The Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina presented its annual volunteer and volunteer organizer of the year awards. In Germany, Generali Deutschland Holding AG, together with the Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, awarded the annual German prize for civic engagement. A national volunteer week was organized in Brazil, Côte d'Ivoire and the Republic of Moldova. Global organizations, such as American Airlines, Deutsche Post DHL, Telefónica and United Way Worldwide promoted recognition and support of volunteerism on a global scale. A one-week online contest, "Volunteering matters", organized by UNV in 2011 received 1,300 photographs from 130 countries. The 18 finalists were selected through an online voting process on Facebook.

13. Examples abound of volunteer events being held as part of international and national days, weeks and years. The Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation has promoted a "spring week of good" since 2010 to strengthen volunteerism and public partnerships in addressing social problems. Volunteering activities marked International Women's Day in Madagascar; World AIDS Day in Belize, Denmark, Estonia, Norway, Peru, Rwanda and Tunisia; World Refugee Day in Slovakia, Sweden and Switzerland; and International Youth Day in Kosovo and the United Republic of Tanzania. On International Human Rights Day in 2010, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights paid special tribute to human rights defenders, recognizing that many were volunteers, and called upon everyone to volunteer with the global human rights movement. UNV,

[8] Mention of names of specific companies in the present report does not imply endorsement by the United Nations.

the United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (UNESCO), the Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service and the European Commission held a global youth exchange on youth volunteerism and non-formal education to jointly mark the International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding and the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations annually engaged volunteers in observing World Food Day.

14. Volunteerism is recognized in other ways. The Governments of Fiji and Luxembourg issued special postage stamps honouring volunteers. Since 2008, the Government of Namibia has presented more than 60 awards to volunteers from various organizations. In 2011, Oman established a high-level award for volunteer activities, reflecting the increasing recognition of volunteerism in the Arab region.

15. The media have been a key partner in recognizing and promoting volunteerism. In El Salvador, media covered on a regular basis the thousands of volunteers responding to the increasing number of national disasters. In Sri Lanka, the grand final of the 2011 Volunteer Awards was broadcast nationwide and streamed on the Internet. In Uruguay, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), seven other United Nations agencies, national institutions and television channels organized an inter-agency award for short films on youth participation, marking the International Year of Youth. An article on online volunteering was published on the CNN website in 2010, featuring the UNV Online Volunteering Service. The World Food Programme (WFP) joined with local media to highlight at the country level its annual global advocacy and fundraising event, Walk the World day. The International Olympic Committee continued to recognize the unique contributions of volunteers to the Olympic movement and the Olympic Games.

16. Volunteering campaigns both promote volunteering and add resources to important causes. The First Lady of Haiti actively promoted volunteering in projects benefiting older persons, mentally challenged persons, women's health and child nutrition. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Namibia encouraged staff to volunteer under the "One hour for development" campaign. The American Association of Retired Persons Foundation, in its volunteer "Drive to end hunger" campaign, partnered with a car racing champion to address hunger among older persons. In Burundi, the Ministry of Health and a mobile telephone company developed a blood donation campaign. "Change the world: Ontario youth volunteer challenge", begun in 2008 and coordinated by 21 volunteer centres in Ontario, Canada, is an annual and growing three-week campaign that encourages high school students to volunteer in their community.

17. Progress has been made in measuring the economic value of volunteerism. In 2011, the Johns Hopkins University Center for Civil Society Studies and UNV supported the completion of initial non-profit institutions satellite accounts by national statistical offices in Brazil, India, Kyrgyzstan, Mozambique and the Philippines. In Colombia, a direct and positive relationship was found to exist between the number of volunteer groups and growth in gross domestic product. In *The Value of Volunteers*, published in 2011, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) estimated its global volunteer workforce to consist of 13.1 million people and valued their contribution at $6.6 billion.

18. While more academic research is needed, surveys and studies by Governments and volunteer-involving organizations have increased the understanding of national

contexts and expressions of volunteerism, measured its scale and value and informed the policies and programming that support and integrate voluntary engagement. Over 65 studies on volunteerism have been conducted since 2008, including studies by Armenia, Austria, China, Kenya, Montenegro, Namibia, Poland, Slovenia, South-Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, and Thailand. In May 2012, the European Volunteer Centre published *Volunteering Infrastructure in Europe*, which contains an assessment of the support provided to volunteers and volunteer organizations in 29 European countries. The *State of Civil Society 2011* report published by CIVICUS draws from 35 national Civil Society Index assessments conducted between 2008 and 2011, which included volunteerism indicators. The *Global Companies Volunteering Globally* study published by the International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE) in 2011 drew attention to the wide variety of corporate volunteering practices among businesses and regions.

19. The national human development reports produced by UNDP increasingly recognize volunteerism as an asset for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development. The reports on Egypt (2010), Honduras (2008/09) and Nicaragua (2011) highlighted the benefits and contributions of youth volunteering. The report on Jordan (2011) noted the contribution of the actions of volunteers to microenterprise development. Volunteering is also integrated into the national human development reports of Brazil (2009/10), Guatemala (2009/10) and Qatar (2012). Other studies examined volunteering and specific thematic issues, such as youth (Bulgaria, Burundi, Finland, Kosovo, UNV); education (Gambia, Mozambique, Zanzibar, (United Republic of Tanzania)); health (Cambodia, Kenya, Uganda); climate change (India); older persons (Generali Deutschland Holding AG, Seniores Italia); emergency response (IFRC, Japan) and international volunteering (FK Norway, International FORUM on Development Service). The UNV concept note on gender and volunteerism (2009) explored gender, volunteerism and development.

20. Conferences and events provide a venue for consultations, learning and discussions on the contributions of volunteerism to national and global progress. Youth leaders from the Forum on Youth Volunteerism for Climate Change and the Environment, sponsored by UNV, the Bonn International Model United Nations and the European Commission, shared their experiences and recommendations with opinion leaders at a workshop on the theme "Sustainable development in times of crises: opposition or opportunity?", convened during the Bonn Symposium 2009. At the first Eastern Caribbean Regional Volunteer Network Consultation, organized by the UNDP Subregional Office in Barbados in conjunction with UNV and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, participants explored how volunteering addresses development challenges in the subregion, particularly in relation to disaster risk reduction, climate change and the environment. The Philippines House of Representatives and UNDP jointly launched an open forum on strengthening people's participation and volunteerism in regard to community development, the attainment of Millennium Development Goals and nation-building. Cambodia, China, Ecuador and Ukraine also held events related to volunteering and the Millennium Development Goals.

21. The General Assembly has recognized the significant contributions of volunteerism in engaging all sections of the population in the attainment of socially inclusive societies. Youth volunteering for development, in particular, has become a

priority for many Governments, United Nations actors and volunteer-involving organizations, and is included as a priority area in the five-year action agenda announced by the Secretary-General in 2012. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) piloted a volunteer programme with 160 young volunteers in Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Among other Governments to engage in youth volunteerism programmes were Argentina, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Ethiopia, Greece, Guinea, Haiti, Iraq, Japan, Kenya, Nepal, Norway, Slovenia, South Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania. In Afghanistan, the Ministry of Youth and international partners supported a national network of youth groups to engage young people as volunteers in their communities. In the Sudan, universities set up volunteering schemes to mobilize qualified students within their communities under the MDG Achievement Fund's joint programme on youth employment and migration. Of 1,510 volunteer teachers in the national volunteer programme of Burkina Faso, some 80 per cent were subsequently certified and recruited as civil service teachers. A study in France, however, found that 73 per cent of job recruiters did not factor volunteer experience into their selection decisions, which highlights the need for employers to recognize volunteering as relevant work experience.

22. Women continue to volunteer in many areas, including the provision of social services and health care, especially in relation to children and older persons. Nepal received a Millennium Development Goal Award in 2010 for its female community health volunteer programme which enhanced community participation and the outreach of health services by mobilizing local women volunteers. Some 50,000 volunteers helped to reduce child mortality in the country by one third over 20 years, to less than 230 deaths per 100,000 live births. There remains, however, a need for greater inclusion of women in civic and professional volunteer activities, such as national campaigning and serving on governing boards, where men currently predominate.

23. Older volunteers continue to offer significant potential. In Chile, under the Ministry for Social Development's senior adviser programme which engaged retired teachers to tutor children of families at social risk, 70 per cent of the students improved their grades. In the United States of America, the Corporation for National Service Senior Corps has annually involved more than 330,000 Americans aged 55 years and older. In Israel, the National Insurance Institute's counselling centres for the elderly are supported by more than 400 older volunteer counsellors and home visitors. The Association of Senior Volunteers in Senegal has strengthened and expanded its regional branches.

24. Persons with disabilities are now less often viewed only as recipients of volunteer services. During the great east-Japan earthquake and tsunami in March 2011, among the volunteers going from house to house to identify and assess needs were persons with disabilities from the YUME-YAZA Foundation. These volunteers assisted persons with disabilities to express their needs and their desire to live with proper support in their own communities. Founded and managed by persons with disabilities, the Antigua and Barbuda Association of Persons with Disabilities is an umbrella organization advocating for the rights of its members while also providing support and services. After a 2009 study showed that persons with disabilities in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland were 9 per cent less likely to volunteer, a £2 million programme, known as "Access to volunteering", was

initiated by the Government with the aim of reducing the barriers that discourage persons with disabilities from volunteering.

25. Other marginalized groups, such as migrants and minorities, are also being seen as potential volunteers rather than just the recipients of volunteering efforts. The ChangeMakers Refugee Forum, which helps refugee communities to participate fully in New Zealand life, involved 50 migrant and community volunteers in the production of a DVD and resource kit to assist refugee families from over 14 countries. In Albania and Croatia, participatory planning initiatives engaging Roma and Egyptian minorities, young people, older persons and persons with disabilities in remote and rural areas increased employability and access to social services. A group of young volunteers in the Talbieh refugee camp in Jordan, run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, tackled high youth unemployment among camp refugees. As a result, one half of the participants found work.

## B. Facilitation

26. Advances in recognition and promotion in the past decade have increased understanding of the need to facilitate volunteerism, both through the strengthening of policy and of the human and physical infrastructure for volunteering. Realizing the full potential of volunteerism to contribute to national and global agendas requires a supportive environment, capacities for sustainable volunteer participation and channels for community-wide engagement.

27. In a 2008 report on the follow-up to the International Year of Volunteers (A/63/184), the Secretary-General noted that volunteerism policies and laws had been introduced or passed by more than 70 countries since 2001. At least 40 new national policies, laws and decrees have since been identified, 15 of which have been launched and 25 others which are in the planning stage. The Government of Côte d'Ivoire adopted a national civil service policy that promotes volunteerism as a component of the national programme developed in relation to the Millennium Development Goals. Azerbaijan, Cameroon, El Salvador, Honduras, Jamaica, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Russian Federation, Serbia and Turkey have also adopted policies to enhance volunteerism as a resource for national development. The Governments of Cambodia, Ethiopia, Jordan, Tajikistan and the United Republic of Tanzania are among those which have incorporated volunteerism into their youth policies.

28. Many volunteerism policies and laws seek to clarify the rights, protections and obligations of volunteers and volunteer-involving organizations and to regulate volunteerism. Lithuania adopted such a law in 2011. In Luxembourg, the Ministry of Family and Integration promoted legislation for accident insurance for volunteers. Ireland approved a scheme to help qualify international volunteers for certain social welfare benefits and pensions after their return to the country. Cape Verde and Namibia provided tax benefits to businesses that support volunteerism. France extended the benefits of Volontariat de solidarité internationale beyond French citizens to any development volunteer sent from France.

29. The importance of protection and security of volunteers is now more widely acknowledged. Colombia and the Philippines defined specific protections, benefits and incentives for volunteer first responders and community disaster volunteers.

IFRC, in resolution 31IC/11/R4 passed at its thirty-first International Conference, stressed the need for public authorities and national societies to ensure appropriate protection for volunteers, including assurances regarding their health and safety. The United States passed the Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act in 2011 to better ensure the safety and security of volunteers overseas. United Nations Volunteers, contracted by UNV under the administration of UNDP, fall under the provisions of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between UNDP and programme countries; however, the agreement does not explicitly cover United Nations Volunteers serving with agencies other than UNDP. While advances have been made in the protection and security of volunteers, more work is urgently needed in this area.

30. A global research study undertaken in 2009 by the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law found that the success of laws and policies depends not only on their adoption but also the process of adoption and whether they are properly implemented. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, civil society organizations engaged in the process identified clauses in the draft law on volunteering which could overregulate and hinder volunteering. Implementation of the Kosovo administrative instruction on the volunteer work of youth is limited by the resource and capacity constraints of volunteer host organizations.

31. Laws that focus on volunteering in formal organizations can endanger indigenous, non-formal volunteer traditions. Quality standards promoted by volunteering networks can lessen the need for more regulation. During 2011, IAVE updated its 2001 Universal Declaration on Volunteering. The World Organization of the Scout Movement approved its Adults in Scouting world policy for the management of volunteers and professionals. Comhlámh (Ireland) promoted responsible, responsive international volunteering with its Code of Good Practice for Volunteer-sending Organizations.

32. While volunteering is not done primarily for financial gain, volunteerism is not free. Governments have directly supported and facilitated resources for volunteer-involving organizations, volunteer management and volunteering. The Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector initiated small grants for volunteer training and public events. Guinea seconded government officials to serve in volunteer associations. The Burundi Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture provided support for fundraising with the private sector and co-sponsored volunteerism events. In Japan, the budget allocation for national volunteer and civil activities included research on volunteerism. The Australian Government announced a new national volunteering strategy in 2011, revising funding arrangements for volunteering programmes. Volunteerism was incorporated in MDG Achievement Fund projects in Albania, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan and Nicaragua.

33. There is broadening support for international volunteerism and overseas volunteers. In 2011, Fiji allocated funds to send 100 volunteers overseas. New or increased contributions to UNV to fund international United Nations Volunteers or to support the Special Voluntary Fund in regard to innovative volunteerism initiatives were made, inter alia, by Afghanistan, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, the Czech Republic, Germany, Slovenia, the Syrian Arab Republic and Thailand.

34. The increasing diversity of channels available for volunteering has facilitated the engagement of increased numbers of and diversity in participants.

35. International volunteering continues to evolve. The United States Peace Corps, marking its fiftieth anniversary in 2011, expanded its response programme to offer short-term, specialized, overseas volunteer assignments to any United States citizen with the required work experience, language and technical skills. Volunteer Service Overseas (VSO), Skillshare, the Peace Corps and UNV, among others, linked international volunteers with national volunteering. Germany founded the Global Civic Engagement service point initiative at the end of 2011 to consolidate all opportunities for the involvement of citizens in development, including young people, experts and older adults. Tasked by the Lisbon Treaty, the European Commission set up the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps. Uniting World, the international agency of the Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia, annually places volunteers with partnering churches in Africa, Asia and the Pacific. National civil society organizations, such as the Dreams Academy in Turkey, offer opportunities for national and international volunteering. In recent years, voluntourism, a system under which tourists serve as volunteers, has continued to grow in popularity, but there is a need for standard setting.

36. South-South and expatriate national (diaspora) international volunteering deserve special notice. By 2009, China had deployed 8,400 volunteers abroad. Some 80 per cent of United Nations Volunteers are from developing countries. The Japanese Asia Youth Volunteer Exchange Programme provides South-South deployments from Asian to African countries. Brazil is providing South-South capacity development with the assistance of United Nations Volunteers at an innovative school project in El Salvador. The African Union Youth Volunteer Corps recruited and engaged youth volunteers from countries members of the African Union and from among expatriates. The Viet Nam Volunteer Network, founded by an expatriate in 2008, facilitated the placement of 62 other expatriate Vietnamese volunteers from around the world in 2011. The Diaspora Volunteering Alliance (United Kingdom) linked organizations interested in engaging and sending expatriate volunteers for up to eight weeks to their countries of origin, such as Myanmar, Rwanda, Somalia and Zambia.

37. An increased number of developing countries, including Burundi, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea and Lebanon, have facilitated national and local volunteer schemes aimed at engaging community members. For example, in Jordan, the Madrasati volunteers programme, launched in 2009 to encourage community service, responsibility and initiative, engaged volunteers of diverse backgrounds and ages from the public sector, universities and local communities.

38. Private sector corporate volunteer schemes were established and strengthened in many countries, including Algeria, Botswana, Cyprus, Indonesia, Ireland, Jamaica, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Madagascar, Mexico, Nigeria, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Spain and Yemen. Approaches are diverse. In the Sudan, the food company Sayga assisted underprivileged groups through an annual employee volunteer initiative known as the Joy of Eid. Transaero, the Russian airline, encouraged employees to volunteer to support persons with disabilities. Since 2008, the multinational company IBM has been deploying volunteer teams on four-week economic and social development assignments around the globe. Increasingly, companies are linking their philanthropic giving with the volunteer commitment of employees. For example, the grain company Los Grobos funded community projects submitted by employee volunteers in Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay. The Global Corporate Leadership programme of United Way

Worldwide, the Global Corporate Volunteer Council of IAVE, VSO and other civil society partners provided increased platforms for knowledge-sharing and cooperation among companies. The Latin American corporate volunteering network, with a membership that has grown to 120 participants from 14 countries since its launch in 2011, conducted a six-hour virtual congress on corporate volunteerism with the support of Iniciativa Brasil. More than 90 per cent of Fortune 500 companies had formal corporate volunteering and giving programmes. It is, however, difficult to gauge with accuracy the global prevalence of employee volunteering programmes since they are not usually mentioned in corporate reports.

39. The public sector is another source of volunteering opportunities and volunteers. In the Philippines, the Civil Service Commission initiative, Spirit of 100 Hours, enabled government employees to volunteer with an institution or community of their choice. In Senegal, 250 civil service volunteers were involved in public health and environmental activities. The VSO project, PolVol, sent British and Irish Members of Parliament as volunteers overseas to share their knowledge of advocacy. Cambodia, Slovenia and Thailand also had public employee volunteerism schemes.

40. Online volunteering has become a channel for increasing inclusion. The UNV Online Volunteering service became trilingual in English, French and Spanish, and each year engages over 11,000 online volunteers in about 16,000 Internet-based assignments in support of the peace and development activities of United Nations entities, civil society organizations and Governments. Greenpeace International provided guidelines and training for online self-organizing platforms, which enabled volunteers with similar interests to coordinate and connect and to organize projects together.

41. Volunteer centres or platforms foster and develop volunteering. They mobilize volunteers around identified community issues, recognize and promote volunteering, connect people to volunteer opportunities and provide training and support for effective volunteering. In New Zealand, 16 autonomous local volunteer centres united under the national network known as Volunteer New Zealand. The Governments of the Bahamas, Belarus, Guinea-Bissau, Luxembourg, Malaysia, the Russian Federation, Togo and the United Republic of Tanzania engaged in the development of volunteer centres, often in multisectoral partnerships.

42. Increasingly, volunteer centres have set up online platforms, with websites and databases supporting their functions. In Japan, the National Policy Agency website supports volunteer activities for crime prevention by listing volunteer groups, opportunities and providing advice on volunteering. Volunteer databases were developed and upgraded in a number of countries, including Andorra, Argentina, Belgium, Greece, Guinea, Ireland, Israel, Romania and Viet Nam.

43. Quality volunteer management means investment in capacity development for volunteer-involving organizations, volunteer managers and volunteers, including trainer networks. Volunteering England introduced a volunteer centre quality accreditation programme. Volunteer Canada provided training and tools in respect of emergency preparedness for people with disabilities to more than 25 regional agencies and their networks. Training for volunteer organizations and managers occurred in Australia, Bangladesh, China, Finland, Latvia, Romania and Viet Nam. The VSO volunteer programme development and management course built a

network of skilled volunteering for development practitioners at the regional and global levels.

44. The training and well-being of volunteers is a key aspect of volunteer management. For the Young Men's Christian Association, volunteer leadership development examples included from-subject-to-citizen training in Africa, training of leaders in Latin America, and global citizenship educational training in Asia and the Pacific. The International Organization for Migration, the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees ensured volunteers received appropriate training in relation to their assignments and adapting to different cultures. In 2009, International Movement ATD Fourth World organized nine regional seminars for its full-time volunteer corps members.

45. Various research methodologies are available for establishing the economic and social value of volunteerism. Businesses can use the London Benchmarking Group Model to establish the benefits of volunteering to communities and businesses, as well as its longer-term effects. In 2011, the International FORUM on Development Service and UNV published the handbook entitled *Assessing the Contribution of Volunteering to Development*. Volunteer Toronto and the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto disseminated a social accounting model, the Expanded Value Added Statement, which combines economic, social and environmental indicators. Volunteering England created the Volunteer Investment and Value Audit and the Volunteering Impact Assessment Toolkit, which are internationally tested tools. VSO and the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex launched a three-year action research study by international volunteers to understand the impact of volunteering on poverty reduction in China, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nepal and the Philippines. Volunteering Australia and the Australian Bureau of Statistics annually conduct a national survey of volunteering issues; in 2010, the survey found that 83 per cent of volunteers considered that volunteerism increased their sense of community belonging.

46. Challenges remain in making regional and global comparisons of volunteering. The European Commission's study of volunteering in the European Union found that discrepancies in definitions and methodologies among national and regional studies prevented a statistically accurate comparison across the European Union. The International Labour Organization contributed to standardizing the measurement of volunteerism by introducing, with the Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies and UNV, the *Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work*, as a means for national statistical offices to develop systematic and comparable data on volunteer work. The *Manual* builds on the existing global capacity for implementing household labour force surveys and will enrich the understanding of the nature and degree of organized and less formalized volunteering.

## C. Networking

47. In the past 10 years, regional and global networks and associations of volunteer-involving organizations have been strengthened and expanded. At the national level, Governments have increasingly identified official focal points for volunteerism and supported collective knowledge-building and coordination to

enhance volunteerism. Efforts have not only included networking among volunteer-involving organizations, but also among volunteers, especially through the use of social media.

48. Regional and international volunteer networks, through conferences, meetings and new technologies, seek to enhance practice and knowledge-sharing among members. They are also increasingly exploring broadened partnerships, joint programming, advocacy and promotion. For example, VSO and the Peace Corps signed a strategic partnership agreement in 2011.

49. The International FORUM on Development Service, a global network of international volunteer cooperation organizations, explores innovative practices and researches contemporary issues in international volunteering and development. Recent annual global conferences, hosted by VSO Jitolee of Kenya and the Singapore International Foundation, were the largest global gatherings on cross-border volunteering. The International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness, adopted in June 2011 by the representatives of civil society organizations from 70 countries, incorporated input from the International FORUM on Development Service recognizing the contribution of volunteers to development effectiveness. The Framework was referenced in the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, adopted by the Fourth High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, held in Busan, Republic of Korea, in November-December 2011.

50. The International Association for National Youth Service, a global network of practitioners, policymakers, researchers and other professionals, encouraged countries to implement policies and programmes supporting the civic participation of young people; facilitated the exchange of information, ideas and practices in youth service; and provided technical assistance to countries. Given the rapid growth in the area of youth service and volunteering, Innovations in Civic Participation, a global network of organizations and individuals, hosted a conference of leaders, experts and innovators at the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center in Italy in 2012 to assess the status of national youth service globally and to develop an action plan to advance the work of the network.

51. The Talloires Network, an international consortium of 250 higher education institutions located in 60 countries, is committed to serving and strengthening societies. Network members agreed to promote the civic roles and social responsibilities of their institutions and to deepen volunteer engagement with communities.

52. The International Association for Volunteer Effort has grown into a global network of volunteers, volunteer organizations, national representatives and volunteer centres, with members in over 70 countries and all regions. The Association's world and regional conferences have advanced exchanges of best practice in regard to volunteer management, recruitment and training, programme development, partnership building and resource development.

53. Strengthening citizen action and civil society throughout the world is the principal objective of CIVICUS, a network of organizations which spans the spectrum of civil society. CIVICUS and UNV have collaborated by carrying out joint research, preparing discussion papers and organizing events to enhance understanding of the linkages between volunteering and civic action. As a result, there are increased opportunities for organizations identified with volunteering to

engage with other civil society organizations and networks around common agendas, such as aid effectiveness and the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

54. The Arab Federation for Voluntary Activity, hosted in Qatar under the patronage of the League of Arab States and with representatives from 18 countries, was established to support, develop and strengthen structured volunteer management within the Arab region.

55. At the country level, Governments have increasingly designated focal points for national volunteerism. Some are at the ministerial level, such as the Ministry on Volunteering and Volunteer Community Programmes in Côte d'Ivoire, while others are positioned to work across government ministries, such as the National Planning Commission in the Office of the President in Namibia and the National Volunteering Secretariat in the Ministry of Planning of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Many are established within line ministries, such as the Ministry of Population and Social Affairs of Madagascar, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Civic Education of Cameroon, the Special Administrative Unit of Solidarity Organizations in Colombia, the National Employment Centre in Fiji and the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Turkey.

56. At the national level, Governments and volunteer networks have encouraged coordination and knowledge-sharing. In Mexico, forums on volunteerism were organized by the Secretary of Health in 2010 and 2011 to reflect, exchange best practices and promote volunteerism. Volunteering England created the Life-Time UK Alliance across the United Kingdom to represent the volunteering network in collaborating with the Olympic and Paralympic Games to be held in London in 2012. Multi-stakeholder national committees to strengthen volunteerism have been organized or strengthened in Bangladesh, Burundi, Cambodia, Cape Verde, the Czech Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Finland, Germany, Greece, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, India, Jordan, Madagascar, Peru, Slovenia, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe.

57. Networks often focus on facilitating quality volunteer management. In Ghana, a number of civil society organizations developed community volunteer management capacities through workshops and seminars. In Portugal, Fundação EDP established partnerships with three universities to study its corporate volunteering programme.

58. Knowledge products and good practice documents were developed and shared among networks, through print publications and, increasingly, through websites. Handbooks on youth development, volunteering for adolescents, cultural volunteerism and volunteer management and training were developed in Honduras, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine and Uruguay. Good practice documents on volunteerism were developed in Belgium, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Philippines. A road map for corporate volunteerism was drafted in Trinidad and Tobago. UNV widely disseminated "Drafting and implementing volunteerism laws and policies: a guidance note", which was developed in collaboration with the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law and the European Centre for Not-for-Profit Law. United Nations entities published project-based knowledge products on volunteering and gender practices, such as "Making a difference: an assessment of volunteer interventions addressing gender-based violence in Cambodia" and *Gender, Climate Change and Community-Based Adaptation: a Guidebook for Designing and Implementing Gender-sensitive Community-based Adaptation Programmes and*

*Projects*. The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction managed PreventionWeb, an electronic platform for practitioners and experts to exchange information on disaster risk reduction on a voluntary basis. PreventionWeb is the main gateway for disaster risk reduction questions and is highly valued by its users.

59. Social media facilitate conversations through electronic platforms. Young members of national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies engaged new technologies and new media to recruit volunteers and introduced services using information communication technology especially for older persons through mobile phones. FK Norway highlighted the achievements of volunteers through weblogs and sharing stories online. The Peace Corps used multiple social media platforms to engage potential volunteers and the United States public in the work of its volunteers, including a Peace Corps Tumblr site (7,800 followers), Facebook (137,704 likes), Twitter (434,722 followers), YouTube (904,705 total upload views) and Flickr (1,967,639 total views). Namibia's multi-stakeholder committee opened a Facebook page and set up a volunteerism weblog. Volunteering England makes strong use of Twitter, Facebook and weblogs to promote volunteerism. Through research, it is exploring the roles of mobile phone applications and microvolunteering (i.e. volunteering for small increments of time). The UNV two-month, multimedia campaign called "Volunteer action counts: make your actions count at Rio+20", saw more than 1,300 volunteering stories submitted and counted more than 64 million volunteering actions for sustainable development.

## D. Integration

60. The General Assembly, by proclaiming the International Year of Volunteers, in 2001, and in its subsequent resolutions on follow-up to the International Year, has highlighted the valuable contribution of volunteer action in addressing peace and sustainable development and one particular challenge: volunteerism remains largely unrecognized in most development agendas. International and national volunteer specialists, besides developing capacity, add the values of solidarity and mutual respect. Participation by community volunteers promotes the sustainable inclusion of all segments of society, especially marginalized groups.

61. While progress at the national level remains uneven, progress has been made in integrating volunteerism into national development planning, integrated strategic frameworks, United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, country programme action plans, programmes linked to the "One United Nations" initiative and other joint programmes, and the strategies and workplans of United Nations agencies. Burundi, Cape Verde, China, Ethiopia, the Philippines, Tajikistan, Togo and the United Republic of Tanzania have included volunteering in poverty reduction strategy papers, national strategies, five-year plans and the strategies of specific ministries. Volunteerism has been integrated into the formulation, planning and implementation of ongoing and new United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and "One United Nations" plans in over 35 countries, including Albania, Guyana, Indonesia, Malawi, Mauritania, Mongolia, Peru and Ukraine. Volunteerism has also been integrated into the development plans and programmes of United Nations partners. WFP now typically integrates into country office plans the engagement of beneficiaries who volunteer with projects, such as building schools.

62. The main evidence of volunteer integration, however, is in connection with the Millennium Development Goals. Provided below are examples of how volunteerism is enhancing people's participation and progress in achieving the Goals.

63. **Goal 1**. Volunteerism is enabling the greater inclusion of women, youth, migrants and marginalized groups in efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger. In Mali and Senegal, International Communications Volunteers linked farmers, fishermen and herders with new technologies and practices that would enable them to gain a fair income from their products. Working with the World Tourism Organization, junior professional tourism volunteers provided support in regard to the sustainable development of tourism and contributed to grass-roots development and employment in a number of countries, including Bhutan, Guatemala and the Niger. Through the Iowa State University Center for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods, women farmers in the United States volunteered to exchange knowledge and experiences with 80 Ugandan women farmers. In a microfinance for poverty reduction project in Zambia, UNV established local microfinance institutions which, now led by Micro Bankers Trust, continue to retain more than 12,000 clients. In Lesotho, the National Volunteer Corps project mobilized unemployed young professionals to support national development efforts while providing them with work experience and training. In South Africa, young volunteers of the loveLife groundBREAKER programme had a significantly higher success rate in accessing employment opportunities than the national average. Operating in 12 countries in the Middle East and North Africa region, INJAZ al-Arab, a member of Junior Achievement Worldwide, collaborated with corporate volunteers and ministries of education to equip students with practical business-related skills.

64. **Goal 2**. To help speed up progress towards the achievement of universal primary education, Burkina Faso deployed about one half of more than 3,000 national youth volunteers to the education sector. Many United States Peace Corps volunteers were placed directly within education institutions and, in 2011, volunteers worked with 2.2 million young people under the age of 25. Under a national literacy plan which guarantees young people and adults access to basic and compensatory education, a programme of the El Salvador Ministry of Education, implemented with the support of more than 11,000 volunteers, assisted more than 100,000 people in 2011.

65. **Goal 3**. In Latin America, gender equality and empowerment of women continued to be aims of the joint project of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and UNV on gender budgeting and volunteering. Budget allocations for women and families in targeted municipalities in Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Ecuador increased or stayed the same in 2011 thanks to the advocacy of rural women volunteers. In Timor-Leste, a United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) volunteer organized a nationwide campaign to reduce social acceptance of violence against children and women and of their abuse, neglect and exploitation. Eighteen European Voluntary Service volunteers placed in nine African countries researched and developed culturally appropriate gender sensitivity activities in the context of international volunteer service projects organized by the Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service. A UNV project in Khartoum to combat female genital mutilation through the participation of local community volunteers in implementation and outreach was replicated elsewhere in the Sudan by UNFPA and UNICEF. Volunteers provided capacity-building to local authorities, civil society

organizations and community networks on the prevention of and protection against gender-based violence in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Namibia, Pakistan and Timor-Leste. A campaign to promote gender equity mobilized 1,500 people in Abeche, Chad. "Partners for prevention: working to prevent violence against women" is an initiative of UNDP, UNFPA, UNV and UN-Women in the Asia and Pacific region. Under this project, the "Stop rape" campaign in Pakistan targeted 15,000 young men aged from 16 to 30 years in Punjab Province by encouraging volunteer peer outreach among young boys and men.

66. **Goals 4 and 5**. Under a Millennium Development Goals project in Zanzibar, volunteers strengthened the capacity of primary and referral health facilities and contributed to improved child health through the delivery of basic health, education, and water and sanitation services. In Haiti, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNV provided essential reproductive health services for earthquake-affected populations through volunteer-led capacity development to address the shortage of skilled midwives. In Bangladesh, a national VSO volunteer worked with a local civil society organization to develop a collective health-care access fund and trained community health volunteers to deliver primary health-care messages through household visits and community health education sessions. In coordination with UNDP, the Governments of Lesotho and Malawi and the provincial government of Limpopo, South Africa, 150 UNV medical doctors provided technical services to hospitals and capacity development to local doctors and paramedics. In India, a Skillshare International volunteer trained 20 community health volunteers who each formed health advocacy committees and a village youth club; trained paralegal workers were included in this effort. A UNV online volunteer from Canada designed a website and posters for the "Deworm Ghana" campaign which was carried out by a Ghanaian civil society organization. Some 3,900 children received deworming treatment through the campaign, which is now being replicated in other West African countries.

67. **Goal 6**. Peer-based advocacy has been a key strategy in combating HIV/AIDS. In Chad, 50 volunteer educators mobilized 1,100 volunteers for the HIV/AIDS sensitization campaign called "Soyez prudent". Under phase two of the Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV project, undertaken by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) in Viet Nam, 10 volunteer self-help groups were formed to achieve better access to government health-care services and to form partnerships with the private sector. In Mongolia, the Ministry of Health, national civil society organizations, UNDP and United Nations Volunteers trained 22 groups of young peer educators, who reached out to more than 3,000 young people and launched an information and awareness portal on health-care and HIV/AIDS issues. UNAIDS, UNDP, the World Health Organization, UNV, Governments and national health institutions partnered on volunteer-based initiatives to enhance health service delivery and to combat HIV/AIDS in Guyana, Kenya, Papua New Guinea, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.

68. **Goal 7**. The involvement of people as volunteers is essential in linking environmental protection with sustainable development. In north central Sri Lanka, a high incidence of chronic kidney disease has been linked to groundwater contaminated by the fertilizers and chemicals used by farmers. The Volunteer Information and Coordination Centre, Sri Lanka Nature Forum and UNV worked

with an entire village to replant trees to absorb the harmful chemicals, and a committee of elders mobilized volunteers to sensitize farmers to the safer, more environmentally friendly use of fertilizers. A project with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, developed the livelihood and conservation skills of 200 youth volunteers in two regions of Ethiopia, demonstrating a sustainable approach to fighting poverty and desertification. When the youth association in the Amhara region received the National Green Award, neighbouring Ethiopian communities began to replicate its approach. In the Comoros, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and UNV developed the capacities of communities dependent on protected areas for their livelihood to find sustainable alternatives. Linking culture, environment and sustainable development, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre engaged international and local volunteers in the promotion and preservation of the world's heritage at sites throughout the world. The Community-Based Adaptation project, a global initiative of UNDP, UNV and the Global Environmental Facility Small Grants Programme, developed locally identified volunteering approaches to enhancing the resilience of vulnerable communities to climate change in 10 pilot countries, including Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Guatemala, Jamaica, Morocco, the Niger and Samoa.

69. **Goal 8**. Global partnerships for development have been highlighted throughout the present report. One growing area for such partnerships is that of sport for development and peace. The International Olympic Committee implemented a special education programme during the inaugural Youth Olympic Games to encourage participants to become responsible citizens and to volunteer. In Ukraine, the Young Football Volunteers project, together with partners including UNDP, the United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace, the German Agency for International Cooperation (Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)) and the Football Federation of Ukraine employed football and related training exercises to reach at least 6,000 rural young people to convey health messages, including HIV/AIDS awareness, and to engage youth as community volunteers. The three concepts of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, "Green Olympics, Scientific Olympics and People's Olympics", provided an environment for community volunteer action, training on volunteer management, environmental awareness campaigns and national media outreach which engaged 1.7 million volunteers and reached over 100 million people. The A Ganar Alliance, led by Partners of the Americas in cooperation with the Inter-American Development Bank, the Nike Foundation and other partners, utilized soccer and other team sports to help young people between 16 and 24 years of age to find jobs, learn entrepreneurial skills or re-enter the formal education system in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Uruguay.

70. In addition to supporting the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, a major contribution of volunteerism is the support it provides for governance and human rights, ranging from technical expertise to ensuring the participation of marginalized communities. In India, the Internet-based Samadhan: Citizens' Action for Governance mobilized 900 trained community volunteers from 226 villages to enable citizens to register and track complaints through text messages which were then posted on an open-access platform. The European Youth Forum set up the YM+ platform to represent the voice of young migrants and young people with migrant backgrounds in policy discussions in order to improve their

lives and assist them in realizing their fundamental rights. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, under the Human Rights Council's special procedures mechanism, has volunteer special rapporteurs and independent experts, as well as working groups composed of volunteers, who are mandated to cover thematic human rights issues or geographical areas with the aim of promoting and protecting human rights in all countries of the world. Volunteers provided electoral support in Afghanistan, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Liberia, Nepal, South Sudan and Timor-Leste. For the South Sudan referendum, United Nations Volunteers served as the main United Nations electoral personnel throughout the country.

71. Volunteerism contributes to the building and rebuilding of social cohesion. Volunteers in Burundi supported the socioeconomic reintegration of ex-combatants and affected communities through community dialogues and gender-mainstreamed microprojects for employment. UNV contributed to conflict prevention and recovery throughout the world by working collaboratively with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Field Support and United Nations country teams. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, United Nations Volunteers, working with the UNDP disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, contributed to the successful demobilization of 23,000 national ex-combatants, including 10,000 children. Volunteers contributed to similar programmes in Burundi, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Liberia. UNV was involved in the transition of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan to its follow-on missions, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and the United Nations Interim Security Force in Abyei. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees routinely trained individual and associations of refugees and internally displaced people as volunteer leaders on issues related to daily life in communities, such as protection, sanitation, HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence. From 2007 to the present, the Program for Human Resource Development in Asia for Peacebuilding, established by Japan to create a cadre of peacebuilding professionals from the Asian region, has deployed 82 volunteer peacebuilders from 13 countries to 29 countries, including South Sudan, Timor-Leste and Uzbekistan.

72. Volunteer action in the context of natural disasters is one of the most visible and publicized manifestations of volunteerism but requires sufficient preparation and organization. Volunteering Australia partnered with the National Australia Bank to manage the outpouring of offers of assistance in connection with the flood disaster in Queensland in 2011. Disaster preparedness plans and training saved lives during the great east-Japan earthquake and tsunami. Volunteers from government, business and non-governmental groups from around the world contributed relief and recovery assistance to the Japanese disaster. The Finnish National Rescue Association has actively promoted trained youth volunteer fire brigades. The Bangladesh Ministry of Disaster Management and Bangladesh Red Crescent Society operated a cyclone preparedness programme with 40,000 volunteers covering coastal areas. Argentinean White Helmets volunteers engaged in disaster risk management throughout the region, including in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Costa Rica, Jamaica, Nicaragua and Paraguay. In China, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Iceland, Kenya, Turkey and Viet Nam, community and youth volunteer teams were trained in disaster preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation. Emergency teams from Islamic Relief, which included volunteers, responded in India, Indonesia, Pakistan and Somalia, providing such basic necessities as food,

water, shelter and medical treatment. The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction recognized that volunteer professionals and experts lead many disaster risk reduction campaigns, such as "One million safe schools and hospitals" and "Making cities resilient". The International Organization for Migration, as cluster leader in camp coordination and management for displacement caused by natural disasters, promoted volunteer mobilization for the improvement of camp conditions, especially through camp management committees.

## IV. Marking the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers

73. The marking of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers, in 2011, consolidated national, regional and global volunteering networks and reinforced national policy and legislation throughout the world. It contributed to policy debate through the adoption of various declarations and recommendations and increased recognition of the impact of volunteerism among key target groups. UNV celebrated its fortieth anniversary in the same year.

74. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 63/153, UNV, as focal point, held consultations with stakeholders from government, civil society, academia, the private sector and the United Nations system to develop a global plan of action to mark the tenth anniversary. A collective vision statement and global call for action, as well as networking resources, guided stakeholder strategies and inspired a common message on the power of volunteer action. In 2010, an international working group of stakeholders was formed to act as a consultative committee.

75. United Nations Volunteers were fielded in 45 countries to support Governments and other stakeholders in implementing national initiatives to mark the International Year. Fifty online volunteers recorded activities, disseminated information and collected examples of good practice and volunteer stories from around the world.

76. A tenth anniversary logo and other materials were designed for use by all stakeholders. A subsite of World Volunteer Web, www.iyvplus10.org, became the repository for materials from all over the world. The subsite will also form a model for the relaunching of a volunteer networking and advocacy site, resources permitting. Collaborations through social media widened the audience for general messaging and advocacy in relation to the tenth anniversary, with volunteering posts receiving more than 10 million page hits during 2011.

77. Governments, the media, civil society, the private sector, development partners and United Nations actors were actively engaged in the recognition of the tenth anniversary at the local, national and global levels. The profile of volunteering in many countries was raised. About 1,350 references to volunteerism in the context of special activities in 2011 were recorded in local and national media in over 100 countries. For example, as part of the Al Awneh (Voluntary Work) festival in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, government, the National Committee for Honouring Palestinian Volunteers and civil society recognized the contribution of volunteers from the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem. Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Youth Development, in partnership with the United Nations Millennium Campaign, the National Youth Service Corps and other national, regional and international

stakeholders, organized a national summit meeting on the theme "Volunteers of Nigeria: towards national development". Stamps and coins commemorating the tenth anniversary of the International Year were issued in Australia and Hong Kong, China, while special exhibitions on volunteering and development were organized in Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan and Tajikistan. India marked the tenth anniversary with a series of high-level conferences and publications and a mass environmental campaign involving a major television station and millions of volunteers. UNEP, UNESCO, UNV, UN-Women and WFP highlighted the contributions of volunteers to their agencies in online Weibo talks in China. Overall, the combination of celebrity power and interactive microblogging reached 30 million Chinese people.

78. The marking of the tenth anniversary helped countries to accelerate progress on the facilitation and integration of volunteerism for peace and development. In El Salvador, the law on volunteerism was approved after 10 years of collaborative effort by government, civil society groups and other volunteer-involving organizations. In Bangladesh, with strong government support, a national advocacy committee initiated processes to create a national volunteering policy and national volunteering agency.

79. At the regional level, the European Union celebrated the European Year of Volunteering, 2011, in synergy with the tenth anniversary of the International Year. The celebration provided a catalyst for the development of networks, highlighted the diversity of volunteerism and increased recognition of its importance, and enhanced volunteerism policies at the national and regional levels. The second Youth Convention on Volunteering (the first was held in 2001), organized by the European Youth Forum and hosted by the European Parliament, brought young volunteers and youth organizations together with European decision makers.

80. Regional consultations on the tenth anniversary were convened by UNV in Ecuador, the Philippines, Senegal and Turkey. These consultations brought together over 250 partners and stakeholders from nearly 100 countries, representing government, civil society, academia, the private sector, youth groups and donors. UNV partnered with Volunteer and Service Enquiry Southern Africa (VOSESA) in the Southern Africa Conference on Volunteer Action for Development, attended by participants from 22 countries. Substantive discussions at such regional meetings helped to document the contribution of volunteerism to peace and development. Participating stakeholders engaged in volunteering alliance building and produced a comprehensive suite of policy recommendations which informed a global volunteerism policy agenda and advocacy messages.

81. At the international level, UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Angélique Kidjo recorded video messages for the tenth anniversary and dedicated her song, entitled "Agolo", to the world's volunteers. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs highlighted volunteering in its campaign in support of World Humanitarian Day. IAVE organized the year's first major volunteer conference in Singapore and, in cooperation with Partners of the Americas, the second World Summit for Youth Volunteering in Colombia.

82. The sixty-fourth annual Department of Public Information Non-governmental Organization Conference was organized in Bonn, Germany, in September 2011 by the Department of Public Information and UNV, in collaboration with the Government of Germany, the City of Bonn and a committee of civil society organizations. The Conference, which had as its theme "Sustainable societies;

responsive citizens", was attended by more than 1,300 representatives. It provided the opportunity to explicitly connect the dots between the potential of civic action and people's participation as volunteers and the implementation of sound sustainable development policies and practices. The declaration adopted by the Conference was circulated as a document of the General Assembly (A/66/750, annex).

83. Also in September 2011, UNV and IFRC partnered to facilitate the convening of the Global Volunteer Conference in Budapest, which focused on volunteering for a sustainable future. Over 200 international stakeholders from nearly 80 countries came together to emphasize the linkages between volunteerism and providing people an opportunity to attain better living conditions, citizen engagement, protecting our planet and sustainable solutions. In its declaration, the Conference called on all stakeholders to better encourage and support volunteering for sustainable development in the future.

84. In November 2011, the thirty-first International Conference of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies adopted a resolution in which it called for stronger partnerships between national societies and volunteering development, noted the declaration adopted by the Global Volunteer Conference and recognized the roles of volunteers in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, peacebuilding and sustainable development.

85. On 5 December 2011, two plenary meetings of the General Assembly were devoted to the follow-up to the International Year of Volunteers and the marking of its tenth anniversary. General Assembly resolution 66/67, co-sponsored by 97 Member States, was adopted. The Executive Coordinator of UNV and two United Nations Volunteers addressed the General Assembly.

86. On the same day, a multimedia exhibition was launched at United Nations Headquarters (the exhibit was moved to Geneva in June 2012). Entitled "All walks of life: volunteers of the world", the display emphasized the impact and variety of volunteerism, covering 23 United Nations and civil society partner organizations and representing 40 countries.

87. The marking of the tenth anniversary has clearly left a legacy for years to come. A UNV-sponsored follow-up meeting of stakeholders, held in New York in March 2012, confirmed the willingness and desire of the partners to continue to build momentum through the next decade. The outcome agenda expanded alliances, strengthened the inclusion of volunteerism and promoted a strong role for civil society and volunteer groups in the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the special event to be organized in 2013 to follow up efforts towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, the post-2015 Hyogo Framework and the post-2015 sustainable development paradigm.

## V. *State of the World's Volunteerism Report*

88. Pursuant to the request by the General Assembly to continue to raise awareness of the contribution of volunteerism to peace and development (resolution 63/153) and as a further action in marking the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers, UNV engaged in an academically rigorous examination of the nature, value and impact of volunteerism. The first *State of the World's Volunteerism*

*Report* was launched by the Administrator of UNDP and its Senior Writer at the meeting of the General Assembly on International Volunteer Day, 5 December 2011, and simultaneously in 66 countries and territories. Eleven more launches followed early in 2012.

89. *State of the World's Volunteerism Report: Universal Values for Global Well-being* highlights the universality of volunteerism with its core values of solidarity, reciprocity, mutual trust, belonging and empowerment, which are basic expressions of human relationships. It notes, however, that many misconceptions exist regarding what volunteerism is and what it contributes. While recognition of volunteer action has grown during the past decade, the phenomenon is still misconstrued and undervalued. The *Report* finds that inconsistencies among ways to measure volunteerism impede comparative, cross-national analysis and do not allow for adequate consideration of the array of economic, social and other benefits that volunteering brings to societies. As a result, the often critical role of volunteerism as a channel for inclusion, by which people from all segments of society can use their knowledge and talents to address key peace and development themes, is rarely factored into programmes and policies.

90. In preparing the *Report*, major knowledge gaps were identified regarding the characteristics of volunteerism, especially in developing countries, and its bearing on peace and development. An extensive review of available empirical research was undertaken. This, together with anecdotal accounts, points clearly to volunteerism being a massive but largely invisible renewable resource to address key areas of concern to the international community. The *Report* focuses in particular on sustainable livelihoods, social inclusion, cohesion and conflict management and natural disasters.

91. The *Report* also examines growing evidence of the positive effect of volunteerism on the well-being of participating individuals, their communities and societies. Volunteer action expands the scope for people, especially the more marginalized, to participate, make positive social connections and to enhance their sense of self-worth and dignity. Volunteerism, the *Report* concludes, should assume a much higher profile as quality of life is increasingly seen as a core concern of all nations. The benefits to well-being associated with the volunteer experience, together with the bonds of trust and societal cohesiveness that derive from relationships forged through volunteer action, should be at the forefront of any new global consensus on sustainable development approaches and goals.

92. By connecting volunteerism to key development themes, the *State of the World's Volunteerism Report* is generating discussion among many stakeholders. As sustainable development goals to meet current and future economic, social and environmental development needs are being formulated, people's volunteer actions must be at the core. This calls for prioritizing a greatly expanded knowledge base on the linkages between volunteerism and such fundamental global challenges as poverty reduction and sustainable development. In this context, the *Report* highlights the need to encourage and support national studies into volunteer action, based on comparable methodologies, so as to ensure that policies are based on sound analysis of the parameters, profile and trends of volunteerism, both in terms of the particular country context and through benchmarking at the regional and global levels. The *State of the World's Volunteerism Report* will be published every

three years on different themes that reflect key areas of concern to the peace and development agenda.

## VI. Conclusions and recommendations

93. The designation of the International Year of Volunteers, 2001, by the General Assembly continues to yield steady progress in the recognition, promotion, facilitation and networking of volunteer action around the world by government, civil society, the media, academia, the private sector and international development actors, including the organizations of the United Nations system. This progress has been accelerated by the marking of the tenth anniversary of the International Year, in 2011. A key indicator of positive trends is the increasing integration of volunteerism into strategies that address the major challenges of our time, inter alia, poverty reduction, education, gender equality, child and maternal health, HIV/AIDS and other diseases, sustainable environments, governance, social cohesion, and disaster response and risk reduction.

94. In Africa, national and regional policies and structures for volunteer schemes, especially for youth, have become common development strategies. The focus on formal service volunteering, however, may overlook the rich traditions of mutual aid and non-formal volunteering that can strengthen community-centred sustainable development. In Latin America, where many volunteering traditions exist, there is regional cooperation on volunteer schemes and programming, and volunteering values are being enhanced by engaging youth with communities in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and national priorities. Advances in supportive policies continue and regional cooperation is increasing in Asia, particularly in regard to volunteer-based disaster response and risk reduction strategies. Countries of the Caribbean region and the Pacific Islands enjoy strong cultural traditions which influence the development of expressions of volunteerism. In the Arab region, businesses are increasingly supportive of employee volunteering as expressions of corporate social responsibility and traditional values, although support for volunteer engagement through civil society requires further strengthening. The European Year of Volunteering, 2011, helped to increase understanding of the potential and challenges in strengthening European and national level volunteer infrastructure, identified the need for comparable measures of volunteering and foresaw a continuing momentum with tangible benefits, such as increases in volunteer numbers.

95. The first *State of the World's Volunteerism Report* underlined the positive effect of volunteerism on individual, community and societal well-being. Recognizing that volunteerism is a massive but largely invisible renewable resource for addressing key peace and development challenges, UNV will continue to publish reports to expand the world's understanding of the linkages between volunteerism and such global issues as poverty reduction and sustainable development.

96. Efforts need to be stepped up to engage the academic community with government and civil society to address the gaps in research on volunteerism and to analyse the impacts of volunteerism on society, especially in developing countries. Governments should facilitate national comparisons of the progress made in regard to volunteerism by agreeing to commonly accepted and accessible measures of its economic and social impacts, and by supporting the inclusion of volunteer action in

any new indicators of social progress, well-being and sustainable development beyond the gross national product.

97. Since 2001, steady progress has been made by Governments in supporting enabling policy and legislative frameworks that will facilitate and strengthen volunteerism. At the same time, care should be taken to ensure adequate support for implementation strategies and not to overreach. The development of volunteer network-led codes of conduct and standards for high-quality volunteer management should be encouraged.

98. The protection and security of all volunteers must be of the highest priority. Governments may wish to reconfirm universal coverage by United Nations functional privileges and immunities of all international United Nations Volunteers, irrespective of the United Nations agency hosting them. In particular, Member States may wish to ensure that all of their nationals serving abroad as United Nations Volunteers are equally protected in the performance of their functions by acknowledging their coverage by the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement. Such acknowledgement would encourage a further expansion of international volunteering opportunities.

99. Governments should continue to support the coordination and facilitation of volunteerism through official, strategically located focal points, adequate multisectoral funding and resources, volunteer centres and quality volunteerism management capacities. Keeping in mind that expressions of volunteerism reflect local social, cultural and political contexts, it is important to recognize that there is no single blueprint for action; supportive actions should respect traditional forms of volunteerism.

100. The continuing growth of expressions of international volunteering is welcomed. Governments should continue to promote and facilitate South-to-South and expatriate national volunteering, and recognize that international volunteering, especially people-to-people initiatives that promote and facilitate home-grown volunteerism, contributes to aid effectiveness.

101. Volunteerism fosters a sense of community belonging and enhances social inclusion, life skills and resilience. Governments, educational institutions and employers should facilitate volunteering as a means to enhance employability and recognize volunteer work in recruitment processes. ECOWAS and the African Union have established youth volunteering corps to address peace and development. All regional organizations should consider similar initiatives.

102. The specific call for action on youth volunteering in the Secretary-General's five-year action agenda demonstrates the priority that Governments and United Nations entities are placing on the engagement of youth in volunteer service. Governments, United Nations entities and other stakeholders should join as partners with UNV to support the launch of a global youth volunteer corps, the spread of national and regional youth volunteering schemes and the growth of the UNV trust fund.

103. Governments should recognize and promote the inclusion of all segments of society, including children, women, older persons, minorities, migrants, refugees and persons with disabilities, to benefit from their diverse life experiences and reduce their marginalization. Governments should incorporate volunteer service into education curricula for all ages and into school-community engagement strategies.

104. Governments should continue to prioritize the provision of support to national, regional and global disaster risk management frameworks that integrate volunteer contributions, ranging from experts and crisis monitoring using new media, to community preparedness and disaster response.

105. Volunteer action should be an integral part of policies and programmes aimed at preventing and responding to conflict. Volunteerism, building on the values of solidarity and mutual support, can help to create cohesion in societies and contribute to the prevention, mitigation and removal of causes of conflict.

106. National and international knowledge and information platforms which foster the sharing of resources and practices of volunteerism should be developed, replicated and scaled up. At the same time, the opportunities provided by new technologies and social media to revolutionize the expression and breadth of volunteer networking and volunteering should be promoted. Resources should be dedicated to expanding beyond World Volunteer Web, to a broad volunteerism networking, action and advocacy platform that makes full use of new social media.

107. The media should showcase the best of volunteering, inter alia, profiles, campaigns, awards, celebrities and international days, and work with Governments and other key stakeholders to conduct national, regional and international media events.

108. Governments should encourage the private and public sectors to support volunteerism, establish and expand corporate volunteerism and incorporate the results into official reports. The development effectiveness of employee volunteerism is enhanced by partnering with civil society. Corporate volunteer councils can facilitate good practices and partnerships at the national and global levels.

109. Recognizing the significant role of civil society in the promotion of volunteerism, it is important to continue to increase dialogue and interaction among all segments of civil society, the United Nations and government.

110. Focusing on community-centred development to accelerate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals has provided increased opportunities to integrate volunteering into United Nations country strategies. Within individual United Nations entities, however, there remains room for improvement. Although volunteerism underpins much of the work of the Organization, greater effort is needed to recognize the ways in which people and communities can volunteer to support the missions and work of United Nations organizations and programmes. Relevant organizations and programmes of the United Nations system should integrate volunteerism into their policies, programmes and reports. Volunteerism should be incorporated into the discussions of statutory and other meetings and international conferences. A comprehensive report should be produced, highlighting volunteerism in relation to the Millennium Development Goals and the work of the United Nations system.

111. UNV should continue its role as the mandated United Nations agency to advocate globally for volunteerism, mobilize volunteers through increasingly differentiated schemes (on-site and online, national and international, youth and older persons etc.) and promote the programmatic integration of volunteerism for peace and development.

112. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and other dialogues on sustainable development should recognize that the engagement of people is essential to promoting sustainable livelihoods, community-based adaptation to climate change, linking development and the environment and moving countries and the world towards common action. Governments and United Nations entities, along with civil society, should ensure people-centred approaches by building on previous statutory and high-level references to volunteerism, volunteers, volunteer community service and volunteer groups. The influence of volunteerism on the well-being of communities and societies should be incorporated as a measure of progress in the emerging post-2015 sustainable development framework.

113. Marking the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers has created new momentum in the development of common platforms to increase support for volunteerism and its contribution to addressing the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. In the follow-up to the International Year of Volunteers, there is need for continued focus on the areas of recognition and promotion, facilitation, networking and integration of volunteerism for peace and development worldwide. The designation of a United Nations decade on volunteering would provide an excellent framework for further initiatives to build and strengthen alliances and networks among volunteers and relevant partners at the national, regional and global levels.